

The President. Well, I appreciate that question. Look, I think that relations are better than some people want to say they are. As a matter of fact, I know relations between our Governments is good. We've done some—we've made some difficult decisions together and have acted together. For example, troops in Iraq—that was difficult. That was a difficult decision for your President. It was a difficult decision for me, as a matter of fact, to commit troops. And yet, we're working together to bring democracy, and therefore peace, to a troubled part of the world.

We had a base realignment issue that we worked out with the South Korean Government. That's not an easy issue, but it's a necessary issue that the Government—South Korean Government thought was necessary and I agreed was necessary. And we did so in a cordial way.

We've got a lot of trade. I mean, the trade between South Korea and the United States is substantial. There is an opportunity down the road for us to put a free trade agreement in. Both countries are going to have to work hard to make that happen. There's a lot of exchange of people back and forth between our countries.

So there's a lot of contact, a lot of commerce, and a lot of security measures we're taking together. I think the thing to do is to keep advancing the relationship and working to make it more mature so that we can work together to keep the peace.

Mr. Lee. Mr. President, you mentioned free trade. And on your recent trip to South America, you stressed the importance of free trade. Will the FTA be on the main agenda when you visit Korea?

The President. Oh, I think—I'm not sure what you mean by "main agenda," but it's certainly going to be an item we discuss. And you know, these agreements are important, but so is a more global agreement, called the Doha round of the WTO. And of course, I'll be discussing that as well, not only with President Roh but at the APEC meeting that South Korea is so kindly hosting.

Mr. Lee. Thank you, Mr. President, for sharing your views.

The President. Well, thank you very much. I'm looking forward to going back to

your beautiful country. And I want to thank the Government of South Korea and the people of South Korea for hosting me and Laura as we return.

Mr. Lee. Thank you, sir.

The President. Yes, sir.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 1:27 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With Phoenix Television of Hong Kong

November 8, 2005

China-U.S. Relations

Naichain Mo. Mr. President, thank you for selecting Phoenix Television for this interview. What greeting and message would you like to convey to the Chinese people prior to your visit to China?

The President. First, that the relationship between China and America is an important relationship. It's a mixed relationship. There is a lot of good that we're doing together, and there's a lot of areas where we may not have full agreement but, nevertheless, are able to discuss our disagreements in a very cordial way. And so I would tell the people of China you live in a great, massive country that's growing well and that we want to have good relations with you.

President's Upcoming Visit to China

Ms. Mo. This will be your third formal visit to China.

The President. Yes.

Ms. Mo. What do you hope to achieve with this visit?

The President. Well, first of all, the visit is giving me a chance to further get to know the leadership. President Hu is a person who I enjoy visiting with. He is a smart fellow. And the more you get to know a person, the better—the easier it is to make good policy.

Secondly, I'm going to, of course, be going to China to represent the interests of my people. I'll talk about the need for trade that is free and fair. I'll talk about the currency,

of course. I'll talk about intellectual property rights that the President and I have discussed before.

And then on the international front we'll, of course—I'll confirm my one-China, three-communiqué policy, that not only says that we do not support independence but as well, we will adhere to the Taiwan Relations Act. I think that's important for the Chinese leadership and the people of China to hear.

We've also got an agenda to fight terrorism, fight narcotrafficking, as well as to work together to convince the leader of North Korea that the Korean Peninsula should be nuclear weapons-free.

So we've got a broad agenda.

Ms. Mo. Keep you busy.

The President. It will keep us busy, but it's an important agenda and the people of China must understand that when the United States and China works together we can accomplish a lot.

Taiwan

Ms. Mo. You brought up Taiwan. I remember in 2001 and 2003 you made strong statements regarding Taiwan.

The President. Yes.

Ms. Mo. And regarding the recent development, do you feel less concern about a cross-strait situation than you were in, like, 2003?

The President. Well, I'm always concerned that one party or the other will do something unilaterally to change the status quo, which would then create, you know, a source of angst and anger. And therefore, I'm constantly reiterating my position so that both sides clearly know the position of the United States.

Ms. Mo. Are you optimistic about a peaceful resolution in the end?

The President. I have seen some—yes, I am optimistic there will be a peaceful resolution. Secondly, I am optimistic because I have seen cross-straits discussion starting to take place. And I urge the parties to continue those discussions. I believe it is possible, through discussion and good will, to end up solving this issue in a peaceful way.

China-U.S. Relations

Ms. Mo. You call U.S.-China relationship “complicated.”

The President. Yes.

Ms. Mo. And we heard U.S. officials and experts have variously called China a threat, a partner, a competitor, and an opportunity. So how do you see China, and what's your plan to deal with China's emergence?

The President. Well, that's interesting—all the different adjectives I guess kind of express a complicated relationship. I would say—I think we've got a lot of issues to deal with, is the best way to describe it. And on issues on which we agree, we can make positive contributions and change.

Issues we don't necessarily agree on, we can work through and do so in a frank way. And I repeat, I think we have a fantastic opportunity by working with China and other countries to make sure that the Korean Peninsula is nuclear weapons-free, which will lay a foundation for a peace in the region and the hemisphere, and that's important.

Ms. Mo. You brought up North Korea. What other issues do you most seek China's support and cooperation? And what do you expect them to do?

The President. Well, first of all, on the United Nations Security Council we work on every issue together. And one way for us to be able to work together is just to share opinions on different issues. For example, I'll bring up Iran. I want the President to understand how I think it's important for the free world and the peaceful world to work together to convince the Iranians not to develop a nuclear weapon.

China has got influence. China is a big, powerful nation. And therefore, it's in our interest that we share ideas and work together. I'll also want to continue discussions on the economic front, because we've got a big trade imbalance with China, but we're making progress. The Chinese took a good first step on having a market currency; I believe they ought to do more. The President made a very strong statement in New York about intellectual property rights. We've reached a textile agreement, which is a very important signal to our folks who want to make sure that the President works for fair trade. And with the trade balance as big as

it is, you know, it's important for people here in America to be able to say to themselves, "We hope it's fair." And I'm going to continue to insist on fair trade as well.

Finally, there is a couple of other areas we can work on, if you've got a second. One is energy. We consume a lot of energy. China is consuming more energy. And we need to share information and share technologies so both of us can diversify away from hydrocarbons.

President's 1975 Visit to China

Ms. Mo. My last question, in 1975 you visited China, when your father was U.S. Representative in Beijing.

The President. Yes, I did.

Ms. Mo. I know you spent your 29th birthday there—

The President. That's right. [Laughter]

Ms. Mo. —and went back a number of visit over the years. Can you share with us some of the memories that made the deepest impression on you when you think of China?

The President. I think of how different China is today than it was in 1975. In 1975—first of all, I had a fantastic experience when I went there in 1975.

Ms. Mo. Good to know.

The President. I really did. It was great. It was really interesting. The two impressions—a couple of impressions. One, everybody was on bicycles; there weren't many automobiles. I happened to be one of the people on bicycles. I rode all over the place in Beijing, which was fascinating.

Secondly, I can remember how odd people thought I looked. In other words, there wasn't much exposure to the West, and all of a sudden an American starts riding a bike amongst them, and it, frankly, surprised some people.

And thirdly, I noticed there was uniformity in dress. People wore the same style clothes. And that's changed, which means there's a market; people are beginning to express their own individual desires and somebody is meeting those desires with a product. There's high-rise buildings that are magnificent. When I went to Shanghai right after September the 11th, 2001, I was—it was mind-boggling to look at the fantastic buildings that

had been built between the airport and the old town.

So this is a country that has progressed a lot since 1975, which shows the vast potential of China. And it explains to people—it should explain to people in America why it's important for our Government to have a good working relationship—as complex as it is, but to have a good working relationship. And we do. And that's in the interest not only of our respective people but it's in the interest of the world.

Ms. Mo. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thanks for coming.

Ms. Mo. I wish you a very good trip to Asia and a successful visit to China.

The President. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 1:34 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Hu Jintao of China; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With Eagle Television of Mongolia

November 8, 2005

President's Upcoming Visit to Mongolia

Gonchigjav Batjav. So there are many developing countries in Asia. So why did you choose to visit Mongolia at this time?

The President. First of all, I am really looking forward to going. This is going to be an exciting trip for me and Laura. Mongolia has got a certain fascination for me. I grew up in the West of the United States where there's—where we like wide-open spaces. And when you think about Mongolia, you think about a big country with a lot of space. But what's interesting about Mongolia is it's more than geography now, as far as I'm concerned. It's a people that have worked hard to become free, a democracy.

We kind of consider ourselves—and we like the slogan, "the third neighbor" of Mongolia. And so I've chosen to go there because of the spirit of the people and a leadership that shares our desire to let the—to have a government of and by and for the people.